



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

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Myths and Facts About Spaying and Neutering

Think you know all the facts on pet overpopulation?



The most important thing to know about spaying and neutering is that it saves lives. In every community in every U.S. state, there are animals sitting in animal shelters waiting for homes. Only about half of those dogs and cats will ever get one. The other half will be euthanized.

Making the decision to spay or neuter your pet means fewer pets—pets as sweet, loving, healthy, and deserving of companionship as your own—will be euthanized for lack of a home.

But just in case you need more information before making this important decision, here is the truth behind some commonly spread myths about spaying and neutering.

MYTH: It's better to have one litter before spaying a female pet.

FACT: Every litter counts.

Medical evidence indicates just the opposite. In fact, the evidence shows that females spayed before their first heat are typically healthier. Many veterinarians now sterilize dogs and cats as young as eight weeks of age. Check with your veterinarian about the appropriate time for these procedures.

MYTH: I want my children to experience the miracle of birth.

FACT: The miracle of birth is quickly overshadowed by the thousands of animals euthanized in animal shelters in communities all across the country. Teach children that all life is precious by spaying and neutering your pets.

MYTH: But my pet is a purebred.

FACT: So is at least one out of every four pets brought to animal shelters around the country. There are just too many dogs and cats—mixed breed and purebred. About half of all animals entering shelters are euthanized.

MYTH: I want my dog to be protective.

FACT: It is a dog's natural instinct to protect home and family. A dog's personality is formed more by genetics and environment than by sex hormones.

MYTH: I don't want my male dog or cat to feel like less of a male.

FACT: Pets don't have any concept of sexual identity or ego. Neutering will not change a pet's basic personality. He doesn't suffer any kind of emotional reaction or identity crisis when neutered.

MYTH: My pet will get fat and lazy.

FACT: The truth is that most pets get fat and lazy because their owners feed them too much and don't give them enough exercise.

MYTH: But my dog (or cat) is so special, I want a puppy (or kitten) just like her.

FACT: Your pet's puppies or kittens have an unlikely chance of being a carbon copy of your pet. Even professional breeders cannot make this guarantee. There are shelter pets waiting for homes who are just as cute, smart, sweet, and loving as your own.

MYTH: It's expensive to have my pet spayed or neutered.

FACT: Many low-cost options exist for spay/neuter services. Most regions of the U.S. have at least one **spay/neuter clinic within driving distance that charge \$100 or less for the procedure, and many veterinary clinics provide discounts through subsidized voucher programs. Low-cost spay/neuter is more and more widely available all the time. Start with this low-cost spay/neuter finder.**

MYTH: I'll find good homes for all the puppies and kittens.

FACT: You may find homes for your pet's puppies and kittens. But you can only control what decisions you make with your own pet, not the decisions other people make with theirs. Your pet's puppies and kittens, or their puppies or kittens, could end up in an animal shelter, as one of the many homeless pets in every community competing for a home. Will they be one of the lucky ones?